



4.5 Wildfire

This section identifies the existing fire protection services within the City of Murrieta and provides an analysis of potential impacts associated with the buildout of the proposed Project. Information in this section is based on information in the proposed Project Safety Element and information provided by Murrieta Fire & Rescue.

4.5.1 Regulatory Setting

Section 5.17 of the 2011 Certified EIR included a discussion of the regulatory setting related to fire protection in the City of Murrieta and Sphere of Influence. Since the Certification of the EIR, California adopted Senate Bill 1241 which revises the safety element requirements for state responsibility areas and very high fire hazard severity zones.

4.5.2 Environmental Setting

FIRE PROTECTION AND FACILITIES

Murrieta Fire & Rescue (MFR) is the primary provider of fire suppression and fire prevention services in the City of Murrieta, while the Sphere of Influence is served by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD). However, MFR participates in an Automatic Aid Agreement with the RCFD to expedite service delivery to the eastern portion of the City. MFR may also provide service to the Sphere by means of this Automatic Aid Agreement. MFR participates in the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement. In the event of a major fire, outside resources can be brought into the City as needed. MFR has five stations located to optimize response times throughout the City of Murrieta, listed in Table 4.5-1, Murrieta Fire & Rescue Stations, with a future sixth station in the eastern Sphere of Influence area (Exhibit 4.5-1 Fire Station Service Areas).

**Table 4.5-1
Murrieta Fire & Rescue Stations**

Station	Location
Fire Station No. 1	41825 Juniper Street
Fire Station No. 2	40060 California Oaks Road
Fire Station No. 3	39985 Whitewood Road
Fire Station No. 4	28155 Baxter Road
Fire Station No. 5	38391 Vineyard Parkway
Fire Station No. 6	Specific Location TBD



STAFFING

Firefighters are cross-trained to provide services for medical emergencies. All MFR personnel are trained to the level of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or are trained as Paramedics. MFR's engine companies are equipped for paramedic service. MFR maintains an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team of professional firefighters that are certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They serve the larger community as part of California Task Force 6, supervised by the Riverside City Fire Department and composed of representatives from several Inland Empire fire agencies. The USAR team members regularly train with other agencies for rapid deployment to local, regional, and national incidents.

RESPONSE TIME AND ISO RATING

MFR has a total response time goal within the City of 6:04 minutes for medical emergencies and an effective response force (all resources dispatched to arrive at scene) for fire incidents of 10:24 minutes as measured by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 Standards and the Community Risk Assessment - Standards of Cover. Stations in the outlying regions experience longer average response times, such as the eastern portion of the City along Winchester Road and in the area between Winchester and the I-215 north of Clinton Keith. A sixth fire station in this area is contemplated to help achieve the target response time.

Insurance Services Office (ISO) rates fire department staffing and equipment, communications centers and water systems. The numeral classification rating is utilized to establish the community's residential, commercial and industrial insurance rates. For every decrease in one rating point, these insurance costs may decrease by approximately 10 percent. MFR's ISO rating is 4 in areas with fire hydrants and 9 in outlying areas that do not have water supply.

PROTECTION FOR HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

As Murrieta develops with more Class A high-rise office buildings, further investments in MFR equipment and personnel are needed. An aerial truck company with a ladder extension of 100 feet or greater will be able to access and provide fire suppression for buildings such as Loma Linda University Medical Center-Murrieta.

FIRE PREVENTION

MFR participates in activities that are aimed at preventing fires and compliance with California Building Standards Code, Title 24, and the California Fire Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24). MFR provides fire protection engineering, building inspections for code compliance, and hazardous materials inspections. MFR also provides education and training in public safety and emergency preparedness.



WILDLAND FIRES

A wildland fire is an uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels that may expose or consume structures. Although not located in a wilderness area, the threat of a wildland fire in or near Murrieta is high due to the wildland urban areas in and around the City, where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with wildland or vegetative fuels. The threat of wildfire is particularly significant during dry summer months and when there are strong Santa Ana winds. The fire season extends approximately five to six months, from late spring through fall. The aftermath of wildland fire produces new areas of potential landslide as burned and defoliated areas are exposed to winter rains.

The undeveloped hillside areas in and adjacent to the City present a potentially serious hazard due to the high potential for large scale wildland fires, as shown in Exhibit 4.5-2, Very High Fire Hazard Zones. The escarpments along the western boundary of the City are notorious for their threat of wildland fires that move quickly through the area. Similar wildland areas exist in northern Murrieta, in the Greer Ranch and Los Alamos areas. Within the City, wildland fires are assigned a severity rating of 3 and a probability rating of 2 in the Riverside County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

There are a number of building criteria and site maintenance techniques available for MFR and property owners to use for areas within a Very High Fire Hazard Zone or areas described as Wildland Urban Interface areas, which are areas where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. These techniques are detailed in the California Building Standards Code California Code of Regulations Title 24, Public Resources Code sections 4290 & 4291, and Government Code sections 51175-51189 and address topics such noncombustible siding for buildings and 100-foot fuel modification (buffer) zones. In addition, community planning, awareness, and involvement are proven elements of effectively reducing the occurrence of wildland fires and damage associated with them.

HIGH FIRE HAZARD ZONES

The MFR provides services that include fire prevention, suppression, planning and engineering, disaster preparedness, rescue services, and emergency medical services. The Sphere of Influence area is served by RCFD through a contract with with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The agencies also provide overlapping service under agreements for automatic aid and wild-land fire response. RCFD has experienced devastating fires in the wildland/urban interface area. Conditions of development are currently required, such as Class A roofing, noncombustible siding and 100-foot fuel buffer zones, to protect communities from wildland/urban interface fires. Additionally, other techniques, such as fuel modification and firebreaks, may be utilized to reduce the threat from wildland fires. Furthermore, community planning, awareness, and involvement are proven elements of effectively reducing the occurrence and damage associated with wildland fires.



FIRE FLOWS

The 2011 Certified EIR determined that water supply has been improved in areas that were identified in the Fire Protection Plan as lacking adequate fire flows, namely, historic Murrieta and Washington Avenue south of Murrieta Creek. Fire flows in these areas are no longer a concern due to upgrades done by the Western Municipal Water District.

4.5.3 Significance Threshold Criteria

According to the newly approved update to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would have a significant effect on the environment if the project is located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones and would:

- Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan
- Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire
- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment
- Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes

While the Certified EIR analyzed fire protection in Section 5.17, it did not address the above items as the update to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines was subsequently approved on December 28, 2018.

4.5.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

SUBSTANTIALLY IMPAIR AN ADOPTED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN OR EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Impact Analysis:

The City does not have defined evacuation routes. However, the City of Murrieta Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses the planned response to extraordinary



emergency situations associated with natural disasters, national security emergencies, and technological incidents affecting the City of Murrieta. The objective of the EOP is to coordinate and incorporate all the facilities and personnel of the City into an efficient organization capable of responding effectively to all disasters and emergencies. It also facilitates multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional coordination, particularly between the City of Murrieta and Riverside County, special districts, and State agencies, in emergency operations. In addition, the City's Fire & Rescue Strategic Plan (Fiscal Years 2017-2020) defines the mission, vision, values, goals, and priority objectives of the MFR for Fiscal Years 2017-2018 which acts as a roadmap to guide MFR in responding to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Future development projects would be required to comply with the City's development review process including review for compliance with the City's Development Code. New developments associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan would be required to comply with all applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction and access to the site. Individual projects would be reviewed by the MFR to determine the specific fire requirements applicable to the specific development and to ensure compliance with these requirements. This would ensure that new developments would provide adequate emergency access to and from the site. Further, the City and the MFR would review any modifications to existing roadways to ensure that adequate emergency access or emergency response would be maintained. Additionally, emergency response and evacuation procedures would be coordinated through the City in coordination with the police and fire departments. Also, the proposed project includes existing and/or revised policies (SAF-3.5, SAF-4.2, SAF-5.1 and SAF-7.4) listed in Section 3.0/Project Description that will further help to identify strategies that ensure the capacity and resilience of escape routes. Therefore, the proposed Project does not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, resulting in less than significant impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures beyond the policies identified in the proposed Project are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Not applicable

DUE TO SLOPE, PREVAILING WINDS, AND OTHER FACTORS, DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT COULD EXACERBATE WILDFIRE RISKS, AND THEREBY EXPOSE PROJECT OCCUPANTS TO POLLUTANT CONCENTRATIONS FROM A WILDFIRE OR THE UNCONTROLLED SPREAD OF A WILDFIRE

Impact Analysis:



Murrieta contains high fire hazard zones in the north and northeastern portions of the City as well as along its western boundary, as depicted on Exhibit 4.5-2 (Very High Fire Hazard Zones). Future development pursuant to the proposed Project may result in the development of the same vacant and underutilized land analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR. Although the proposed Project would allow for an increase in 1,572 residential units, it also encompasses a decrease of 2,405,601 square feet in allowable non-residential uses.

Additionally, the proposed General Plan Safety Element policies that specifically address wildland fires (SAF-7.1 to SAF-7.5) have been revised to help to further reduce the incidence of damage to life and property from wildland fires as listed below. In addition, a new policy (SAF-7.6) directs the City to maintain and update its Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to maintain consistency with CAL FIRE's recommendations. In addition, Mitigation Measures FP-1 through FP-4 from the 2011 Certified EIR require the preparation of fuel modification plans and sufficient water supply during construction and are applicable here. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project policies and the 2011 Certified EIR's mitigation measures (FP-1 through FP-4) would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures Identified in the 2011 Certified EIR and Applicable to the Project

FP-1 The MFR shall review future development projects to determine if a Fuel Modification Plan is required. If required, project applicants shall prepare the Fuel Modification Plan in accordance with MFR requirements prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit.

FP-2 Brush clearance shall be conducted prior to initiation of construction activities in accordance with MFR requirements.

FP-3 Adequate access to all buildings on the project site shall be provided for emergency vehicles during the building construction process.

FP-4 Adequate water availability shall be provided to service construction activities.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT COULD REQUIRE THE INSTALLATION OR MAINTENANCE OF ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (SUCH AS ROADS, FUEL BREAKS, EMERGENCY WATER SOURCES, POWER LINES OR OTHER UTILITIES) THAT MAY EXACERBATE FIRE RISK OR THAT MAY RESULT IN TEMPORARY OR ONGOING IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONEMNT



Impact Analysis:

The 2011 Certified EIR determined that buildout of the 2011 General Plan would result in additional demands on existing fire services, as individual projects are developed and associated increases in population are realized; new developments associated with the buildout of the 2011 General Plan would be required to comply with all applicable fire code and ordinance requirements for construction, access, water mains, fire flows, and hydrants. Individual projects would be reviewed by the MFR to determine the specific fire requirements applicable to the specific development and to ensure compliance with these requirements. This would ensure that new developments would not reduce the staffing, response times, or existing service levels within the City. The 2011 Certified EIR determined that adherence to the 2011 General Plan policies (SAF-5.1 – SAF-5.5 and SAF-6.1 through SAF-6.9) would reduce fire protection service impacts to a less than significant impact. The proposed Project includes revised and/or new policies (see Section 3.0/Project Description) to further reduce fire risk associated with the implementation of the proposed Project as listed below resulting in less than significant impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures beyond the policies identified in the proposed Project are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Not applicable

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT COULD EXPOSE PEOPLE OR STRUCTURES TO SIGNIFICANT RISKS, INCLUDING DOWNSLOPE OR DOWNSTREAM FLOODING OR LANDSLIDES, AS A RESULT OF RUNOFF, POST-FIRE SLOPE INSTABILITY, OR DRAINAGE CHANGES

Impact Analysis:

The 2011 Certified EIR determined that development associated with implementation of the 2011 General Plan would be subject to the City's Municipal Code. Chapter 15.56.040, Methods of Reducing Flood Loss, which establishes provisions to ensure damage from floods within the City is minimized. Chapter 15.16.070, General Provisions, and Chapter 15.56.120, Administration, establishes flood zones in accordance with FEMA, and administrative procedures regarding development within or around flood zones. Additionally, the 2011 General Plan Safety Element includes policies (SAF-3.1 – 3.6) to address flooding and flood hazards within the City. Additionally, the 2011 Certified EIR determined that the 2011 General Plan does not propose altering any drainage patterns. All applicable standards would be applied to future development projects to ensure that they are not constructed in a way that would alter a stream or river, or result in substantial erosion or flooding and that no mitigation measures beyond the policies identified in the 2011 General Plan are required.



Future development pursuant to the proposed Project may result in the development of the same land analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR. Implementation of the proposed Project could expose people or structures to risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. However, development associated with implementation of the proposed Project would be subject to the City's Municipal Code, Chapter 15.56.040, Chapter 15.16.070, Chapter 15.56.120, and the 2011 General Plan Safety Element policies (SAF-3.1 – 3.6) discussed above resulting in less than significant impacts. Additionally, the proposed Project includes three new policies (see section 3.0/Project Description) to further reduce risks.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures beyond the policies identified in the proposed Project are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Not applicable

4.5.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis:

Development associated with implementation of the proposed Project could be exposed to wildfire risks. However, future development pursuant to the proposed Project may result in the development of the same vacant and underutilized land analyzed in the 2011 Certified EIR. Additionally, the 2011 Certified EIR contains mitigation measures and the proposed Project includes policies that address wildland fires risks to further reduce the incidence of damage to life and property referenced in this section above. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project policies and the 2011 Certified EIR's mitigation measures (FP-1 through FP-4) would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. The City would need to continue to consider impacts to wildfire services as part of the long-term planning process which it has done with the proposed Project which serves as a long-term planning document and anticipates future growth. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in cumulatively considerable wildfire protection impacts.

Policies in the Proposed General Plan: Refer to the policies referenced above in this Section and/or Section 3.0/Project Description.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to the mitigation measures in this Section. No additional mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant impact.



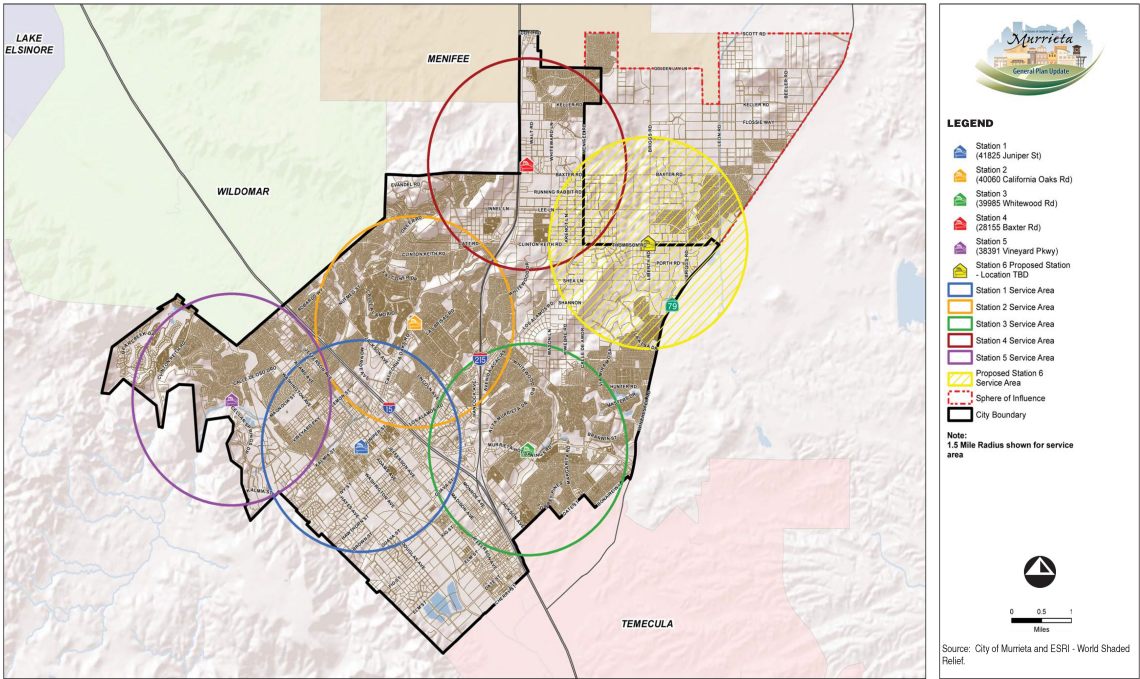
4.5.6 Significant Unavoidable Impacts

Wildfire protection impacts associated with implementation of the proposed Project would be less than significant by adherence to and/or compliance with policies in the proposed Project and recommended mitigation measures. No significant unavoidable wildfire protection impacts would occur as a result of buildout of the proposed Project.

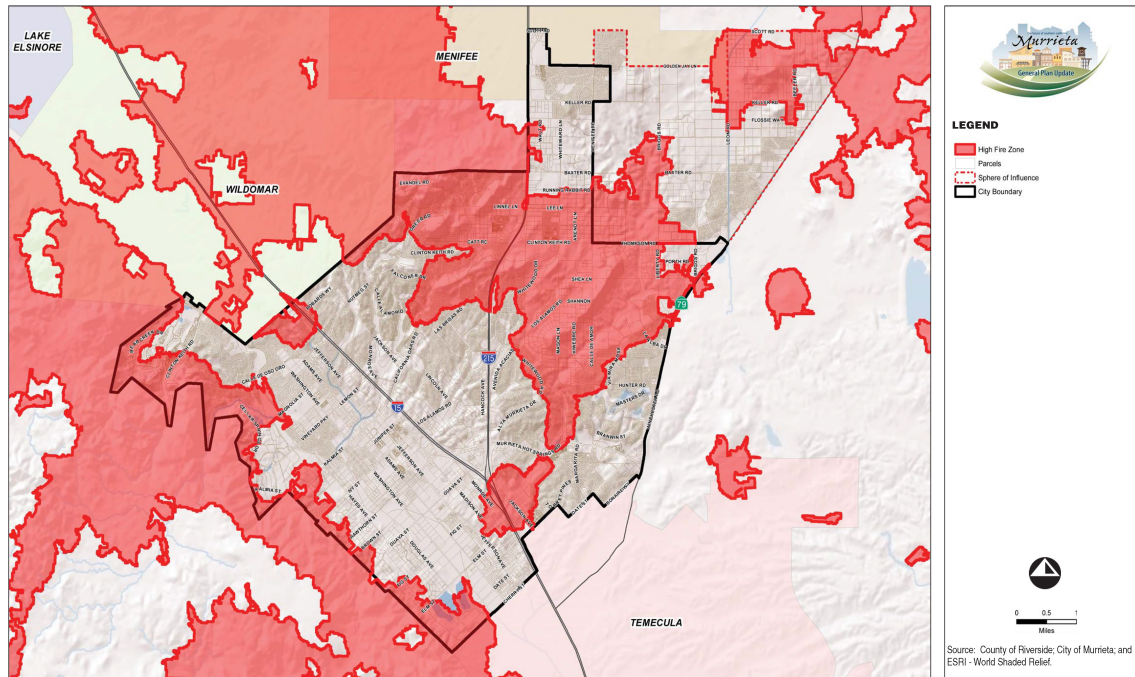
4.5.7 Sources Cited

City of Murrieta Final General Plan EIR, July 2011.

Proposed General Plan, August 2019 (Appendix H)



Fire Station Service Areas
Exhibit 4.5-1



RBF
CONSULTING
001-1810-0001

High Fire Hazard Zones

Exhibit 4.5-2